

20 November 2006

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am very pleased that today, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution on the "Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council". It is the result of a long and at times difficult process of consultations. We have finally concluded this important process in the spirit of true compromise.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all delegations for their active and constructive participation in the consultation process on this important matter.

In particular, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to Ambassador Verbeke of Belgium and Ambassador Diarra of Mali for their strong and dedicated leadership in conducting the consultations, and to commend Mr. Ruiz of Mexico for his tireless facilitation.

This draft resolution is an important milestone in realizing the vision of our leaders at the 2005 World Summit. The resolution, once adopted, will strengthen the role of ECOSOC as a central body for coordination, policy review, policy guidance and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the international development goals.

This resolution will also be an acknowledgement of the central importance of development as one of the principal pillars of the United Nations.

This resolution will enable the Council to launch the Annual Ministerial Review and Development Cooperation Forum during the 2007 High Level Segment of ECOSOC in Geneva. Beginning in 2008, the Development Cooperation Forum will meet every other year in New York.

The resolution will also provide for the Council to respond to humanitarian emergencies as and when they occur, by convening "ad hoc meetings". This will contribute towards making UN humanitarian responses more effective and efficient.

Furthermore, the resolution will bring a sharper focus to the linkages between the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and ECOSOC's ad hoc advisory groups on countries emerging from conflict. I am confident that these new functions will put the Council at the centre of global

efforts to realize the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. This is both a demanding responsibility and a tremendous opportunity for the Council to perform more effectively.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

We have worked hard for almost one year to reach agreement on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council.

It is my sincere hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, to enable the Economic and Social Council to implement its new functions as mandated by our leaders at the 2005 World Summit.

Thank you.